101 word which we write and pronounce Kaarta means "country of
103 the Karé" or, more accurately, "the group of the Karé." Wher-
131 ever there are Karé people they are called, in the Soninké language, Karu-ta, [5] which is contracted to Karta. From this we made Kaarta because we misheard the long first "a." The word Kaarta designates a particular area only because of the people who inhabit it, and its value as a geographical expression is acquired only by extension. Among the natives the term is used for various areas within the region which extends from Goumbou to Koniakari and from Nioro to the Senegal River. On our maps, Kaarta is bounded by Kingui on the north, Diomboko on the west, Senegal and Bélédougou on the south, and Kaniaga on the east. However, all of these names of cantons themselves have very vague meanings.

101 For the purpose of the present work, the word Kaarta takes
103 on a special meaning. The Bambara who founded a clan at
131 Sounsan-na in the Karé country are called Karta-n-ko in the
614 Soninké language and Karta-n-ka-u (the Kaarta people) in the Bambara language. As a result, Kaarta has become the name of the areas occupied by the clan in its various peregrinations.

The "people of Ségou" acquired their name in quite a different manner, since they were named for Ségou, the capital of the clan. The country of Ségou should be understood strictly to allude to the to-da which, to be described in chapter 5, was, by and large the area surrounding Ségou and occupied by the chief and his family and followers. In a wider sense, the country of Ségou referred to all the territory under the authority of the Ségou clan. At the height of the clan's power, "the country of Ségou" occupied both banks of the Niger, following the axis of the river from Kangaba to Timbuktu.

101 Our European need to have things clearly defined may be
131 satisfied by having the territorial limits of Kaarta and Ségou set
631 forth on a map, but on the native level, with which this book is primarily concerned, such local definition has little relevance. These empires did not aim to dominate any given area but rather sought to exploit as large a number of individuals as possible without regard to country or race.

571 182 with individuals in the same way as individuals deal with each other. They are not only moral persons, as we put it, but they are truly persons, [156] as evidenced by the Blacks' impulsive need for anthropomorphism.

812 Let us note, finally, that a Black does not abstract himself from surrounding nature; nor has he reached the stage of development at which man regards himself as a kind of intermediary between the natural and the supernatural. The Black is an integral part of nature and that is why he treats it like himself. Therefore, natural phenomena are subjected on his behalf to the same kind of ritual sequences as those followed in his own behavior.

Chapter 3

Communities

1. General Considerations

114 631 Native society is not simple, and Europeans studying these countries have used terminology which, not being defined, has obscured reality.

In particular, they have used the terms "kingdom" and "empire" to describe Sudanese states, and both authors and readers have taken these expressions to imply a social organization more or less analogous to those meant by these words in our country.

631 These empires or kingdoms, however, are simply clans, i.e., political groups that have imposed their authority on other groups whose members then become their tributaries, members of a caste, or slaves. Such an empire, if one wishes to use this term, has no exact geographical boundaries or, if one prefers, its boundaries are constantly changing. Furthermore, the country embraced by this term has two parts: territories which may be said to be under direct administration, in which the authority of the clan is directly imposed; and those territories whose position with respect to the ruling clan

631 is highly variable, ranging from complete subjection to quasi-independence.

565 [563] The imperial clan, or, if one prefers, the dominant clan, most often prevails over people of races other than that of its own members; frequently this clan itself includes, at least originally, diverse ethnic elements. [158]

If such heterogeneous associates are to live side by side without clashing, they must have a large body of common customs, and this indeed is the case. Wherever one studies it, the native milieu resembles a compartmented area whose individual sections seem, at first glance, to be isolated. At the top of the social structure there is a kind of nobility composed of the head of the clan, his family; and then the families of the clan; next come the free men, simply free or members of castes; and finally the slaves. In actual fact, a continual reciprocal movement between these elements welds all of them together.

614 596 The fact is that the whole social body exists only through the severity of the life of the cells that compose it: the families. Among other characteristics, these families are very jealous of their respective independence; nevertheless, they are closely allied among themselves even as they freely absorb the foreign element constituted by the slaves.

It is, therefore, essential to concentrate our attention on the family cell in order to understand the essential element of native social life. This is all the more true in that all the native collectivities are, so to speak, modeled on the organization of the family.

The Bambara language has no word exactly equivalent to our word "family" in the legal sense (1). Different names

1. This is why we prefer the term "community," but in view of the remarks made here, the use of the word "family" will not be ambiguous.

are used to designate the collectivity under the authority of the

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[697]

near Djenné. The son of the chief of that village drank the special liquid, in spite of the fact that the wara-fmina-den' had told him not to do so, and died. The latter was accused of having poisoned him, but when he explained the circumstances before the native tribunal, he was acquitted.

It is said that this drink is made by soaking any sort of root found while digging graves and seasoning it with pepper, salt, and red peppers. The beverage, which is highly intoxicating, is ritually consecrated.

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796 Excited by this beverage and by the songs and dances of a crowd which is itself warmed with drink, the wara-mina-den' during major festivals acts as a visionary who freely reveals the will and desires of the god. On the evening before these important ceremonies and for several evenings before that, all the clergy and their aides meet for a kind of rehearsal of the dances and songs. It is then that the young men prepare for the major roles they will later play. The [286] wara-mina-den' is particularly concerned with the training of the man who will replace him in case of need.

There is nothing of special interest to note about the brotherhood's treasury, which is acquired and appropriated just as in other brotherhoods. The political action of the Nya and its relations with the communities are also such that they require no special attention. [287]

Chapter 5

The Clans

1. General Considerations

631 It is usual to use the word "empire" or "kingdom" to describe the form of government of most of the Sudanese states and particularly those founded in Kaarta and Ségou by the

631 Bambara, with whom we are here concerned. Each writer, however, uses these terms to refer to an ill-defined type of authority, sometimes without even attempting a critical comparison with similar institutions in our own countries.

This uncertainty is accompanied by other such doubtful similarities, which result in confused conceptions. Is it not common to speak of feudalism, of a feudal system, to describe the kind of hierarchy among various native chiefs? In the Sudan, however, there is no connection between man and the land comparable to that which was the basis of the feudal system. Indeed, no such meaning is possible, since the Sudanese does not recognize any right of ownership of land. Therefore, political ties between native chiefs are never based on land; how then can one speak of a feudal system?

614 As a matter of fact, the social unit is the community based on the family; it develops into a patriarchy and expands into a tribe and a people. Its members are united by blood ties, which are confirmed by the ancestor cult. [288]

Since they are proud and jealous of their freedom, communities seek to remain independent. Their relationships, however, determined especially the occupation and exploitation of a common territory, force them to give up this independence, and joining together in the same cult, the sign of their spiritual solidarity, they form a dugu (1).

1. This word is not without ambiguity. On the one hand, it means "that which is below," hence, "the soil"; on the other hand, it means "place," "residence," or "at the home of." It is understood to mean "territory" or "country" occupied by a human collectivity, and by an easily understandable deviation, it likewise designates the organization which governs this collectivity in relation to this territory.

614 The dugu have definite territorial domains, and they,
62| too, prefer to live without the subordination of any one of them
631 to the others. There are relationships between some of them, such as some being offshoots of others and, due to proximity, many matrimonial unions have bound them together.

Unavoidable necessity also often forces the dugu to form leagues, coalitions, or more often associations called kafu' (literally, "union"). Depending on the circumstances, a chief is elected by the association or he usurps the authority over it. This sometimes results in the creation of a political or administrative organization. The Ségala area, also called Sénébala, is an example. "It has a local history of several centuries, hereditary chiefs of several dynasties, social and matrimonial bonds and customary institutions which have persisted for generations; it is a nation and a fatherland" (2).

2. In Marty, Etudes sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan [Studies on Islam and the Tribes of the Sudan], Vol. 4, p. 105.

614 It also may happen that someone who becomes a chief
63| will be so enamored with the exercise and the profits of
661 power that with the support of his followers -- relatives or others -- he will manage to retain permanent control. This association is what we here call a clan; the Bambara designate it by the word ton', applicable to any association.

As an organism of authority, this clan may be defined as an oligarchic government founded for the sole purpose of subjugating, by any means, the individuals it can reach for the sake of exploiting them. Those who are enfeoffed to this government are called "the people of So-and-So" or "the people of such and such place" by the Bambara, as by other natives, [289] for example: the Massa-si-u (1),

1. From another point of view, Massa-si-u means "descendants of Massa," and hence, "the tribe of Massa."

614 "the people (of the clan) of Massa"; the Segu-n-ka-u (2),
631

2. From another point of view, Segu-n-ka-u means "the people of the country of Ségou."

"the people (of the clan) of Ségou."

104 Since we are always obsessed by our own system of or-
128 ganization, these terms appear in our writings as village (dugu), canton or province (kafu), and empire (ton', which is a clan).

Because of the convenience of expressions that are familiar to us, we shall use this terminology in this study, and it seems essential to define briefly the value of these terms in native society in order to avoid ambiguity which, to say the least, gives rise to distorted delusions.

173 In Kaarta and the Ségou country before the time of the
563 two great clans whose history we have given and whose develop-
631 ment and operation we are about to describe, there were dugu which usually had no connections or at most were joined in some ephemeral kafu. These kafu were composed of a majority of Bambara mixed with Soninké and people of other races. The Soninké dugu were noted for their prosperity, sometimes even wealth, and this gave them a degree of pre-eminence over the Bambara dugu. This prosperity rested on the labor of a slave population that the Soninké had managed to acquire for the most part by commercial dealings.

This de facto hegemony usually had no corresponding political or administrative organization; its only outward sign was the scorn with which the Soninké regarded the less fortunate Bambara and, conversely, the sullen hostility of the Bambara toward the rich Marka (as they called the Soninké). As a consequence, local quarrels broke out from time to time which sometimes developed into bloody conflicts. The early history of the Massa-si clan is a good example of this state of affairs, to judge by the record in the chronicle cited above.

173 The Ségou-Kaarta regions, under the authority of Mandé
631 and Songhaï clans, were in this state, in semiobscurity because they were outside the zone of direct administration by these clans.

173 Their people, [290] except for the payment of required tribute,
631 lived as they pleased and followed their own customs as long as the latter did not offend the dominant clan.

2. Clan of the "People of Ségou"

Development of the Fla-n-ton' of Ségou-koro

575 According to the chronicle cited earlier, the origin of the
561 clan of Ségou must be attributed to the development of a fla-n-ton'.

Those persons who have undergone the rite of soli together are united in a fla-n-bolo (band of peers); the fla-n-bolo of three consecutive soli form a fla-n-ton' (assemblage of peers). The members call themselves ton'-den' in relation to the association, and fla-ni in relation to one another.

In each fla-n-ton' there is a ton'-tigi (head of the assemblage) elected by the ton' den', who is just as likely to be a wolo-su (slave born in the house) as the son of a notable; a dyala-tigi (distributor), likewise elected by the ton'-den', is especially charged with the distribution of food for the group's banquets and with the enforcement of regulations; a ton' dyeli is a kind of beadle appointed by the ton'-tigi who has him make preparations for meetings, assemble the members, announce orders, etc., and he is usually a young person of caste. There are people of all races and of all ranks in the fla-n-ton', and in the association there is theoretically, complete equality among them. Indeed, this equality explains the term fla-ni-u (peers) which they use among themselves.

In principle the aim of the fla-n-ton' (1) is to establish

1. As we have noted, there are fla-n-ton' for women as well as for men, but we are not considering them here; their role is insignificant from the present point of view.

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567 The status of this caste-slave carried over to his descendants ad infinitum, even in the case of those persons who rose to the highest positions. Thus, the Dyara of the family of Ngolo Dyara kept the stigma attached to the servile status of their ancestor (1). In practice, the wishes of an all-powerful master

1. See Raffenel, Vol. 1, p. 371.

could change the status of those under his authority since, as we have seen, the fa made the law. However, this arbitrary will did not leave a man without recourse, as we saw in the chronicle in the case of the aforesaid Ngolo in his relations with Mamari. If one could appeal to the good offices of someone close to the fa, it was often possible to make him change his mind.

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631 The furu-ba dyon' (ton'-dyon' or furu-ba dyon', properly speaking) were under the orders of "chiefs of slaves" (dyon'-kuntigi-u). There are supposed to have been 120 of these chiefdoms under Ma-n-son, according to the words attributed to Tonmassa in the chronicle. According to the same source, the number rose to 140, and then Ma-n-son reduced the number to 60 hereditary posts with authority over a varying number of furu-ba dyon' who were scattered about in the various regions subject to the clan, the whole subservient to the decision of the fama. The chronicle shows us how the fama established or broke up these chiefdoms for the greatest variety of reasons. Whenever he had an enemy who needed watching, an attack to be prepared, a country to be exploited, or a service to be organized, he conscripted men wherever he liked, ordered whole populations to move, and appointed a chief to take command of the enterprise and to carry out his orders, whenever and however he wished.

Among the dyon'-kuntigi there was a hierarchy [302] based on seniority theoretically and also on the importance of the duties; as a result, some of them were great chiefs. One of these, called the ton'-masa, came to be the supreme chief over the ton'-dyon in particular and all the furu-ba dyon' in general. In the fla-n-ton' the ton'-masa had the duty of convening the ton'-den' and of watching the ton'-dyon' to see that they

614 performed the work ordered by the ton'-tigi. The ton'-masa had
631 the same duties in the furu-ba: he made sure that the furu-ba dyon' executed the orders of the fama while acting as intermediary of the dyon'-kuntigi. Since, in short, he represented all the furu-ba dyon', his office gradually tended to put him in opposition to the fama. In the last analysis, what can a fama accomplish if he is opposed by a ton'-masa with all the force of the furu-ba dyon' behind him? That is why Mamari thought he would be able to rely on the devotion of the holder of this high office if he chose him, not from among the furu-ba dyon', but from among his personal slaves. He bought a slave and made him a ton'-masa.

*173 The furu-ba dyon' were first used, though not exclusively
614 as might be thought, for armed forays, variable in scope, from
631 which everyone profited: Mamari, first of all, by increasing prestige and by extending the areas under his sway; the furu-ba dyon', and Mamari too, by adding to their fortunes. The sons of Mamari, obviously anxious to perpetuate their acquired position and not run the risks of brigandage, decided to turn the activity of the furu-ba dyon' toward agriculture. This new orientation gave rise to a crisis, since it was not at all to the taste of one faction which included a large number of furu-ba dyon'; hence there arose internal quarrels, in which one episode was the murder of Dé-koro.

It was during these disturbances that many of the ton'-dyon' and dyon'-kuntigi conceived the idea of dropping out of sight to live independently on the proceeds of the property of the furu-ba entrusted to their case. Successive fama naturally tried, by terrible examples, to bring the rebels to terms, but they succeeded only temporarily by means of force, and when their power declined, these usurpations multiplied. Some of them were sanctioned definitively by the hereditary rights accorded to the 60 posts. [303]

The Fama

614 The second element in the clan was the power of direction, organization, and surveillance, and the holder of this power

538 that the griot is often a wretched character, an insignificant
814 parasite living at the expense of everyone. There are those among them, however, who carry out their duties as archivist very faithfully and who are sincerely devoted to their masters, great and generous lords in the native fashion whose interests and reputations such griot ably defend.

It is griot of this last type who transmit the reliable historical tradition from which we have borrowed the foregoing accounts. There [318] is no doubt that these griot, true "masters" (dyeli) of historical traditions, have played a considerable role in native society. Therefore their words should never be passed over lightly, although obviously they should be subjected to judicious criticism.

The To-da

614 In origin, evolution, and contingencies, the clan de-
● 631 veloped from the social bases already studied, community and brotherhood, of which it is, in the last analysis, only an amalgamation. As a result, its various manifestations are similar to those of these institutions, even though possessing its own peculiarities.

One of the most characteristic features of the clan is the to-da, which was the familiar term used by members of the clan for the region in which they lived. The word literally means "the pot of mush" and alludes to the essential element in the corporate
[539] banquets of the fla-n-ton'. As the saying goes: "furu-ba to, to kadi, na ka ko, (at the corporate meal the mush is good and the sauce is bad.")

The to-da originally was limited to Ségou-koro and its immediate environs, i.e., the small number of villages affiliated with the ton' either voluntarily or by force. It progressively extended its sway along the Niger: first on the right bank as far as Kirango; later almost to Dina; finally it extended its influence over a broad area on both sides of the river from Kan ga-ba to Timbuktu.

This territory was organized in various ways. The key region ran along the Niger from Dina to Kirango, and the sector

614 631 between Ségou-koro and Kirango was the area under what we would call direct administration, because this zone was occupied substantially by the fama, his community, and his ton'-dyon'.

614 794 Ségou-koro, which had witnessed the birth and the development of the clan, had remained Mamari's capital; he preferred to live there, and he had installed the protective idols of the clan there. Thus it was, so to speak, the seat of the brotherhood, whose four principal idols continued to be known under the 778 names of ba Kongo-ba, na n-Golo ko, Nye-dinge-dun', and 776 Kolo-koloni. [319]

The fama was the high priest, and the other officiants of the cult were chosen from among the ton'-dyon'; that is why Ngolo Dyara was dye-n-fa. Any follower of Mamari or his successors was affiliated with the cult of these idols. The adepts who lived far from Ségou-koro founded branches which in certain ways were so dependent on the capital that Ségou-koro was for a long time regarded as a holy city.

We have no detailed knowledge concerning the cult of these important idols; we only know that in general they did not differ greatly from what we have already said about the nyana of the boli. The annual festival was exceptionally solemn and brought the faithful from even quite distant regions. The fama, of course, presided over the ceremony which involved certain essential rites: a renewal of religious faith, the reception of new 614 members, and an oath of loyalty to the fama.

794 776 The four deities mentioned above were not the only ones in the Bambara pantheon at Ségou (1); others were added, some

1. In Les Bambara [The Bambara], Father Henry mentions, in addition to ba Kongo-ba and na-n-Golo-ko, two other idols, Kuantara and Safolo.

bought and others invented out of the extravagant faith of the ton'-dyon'. Among the latter should no doubt be included the drums of the ton'-dyon', which are mentioned several times in the accounts and which are presented always in a very bloodthirsty light. Ngolo sacrificed his most hated enemies to the drum-idols,

622 gives the orders concerning local celebrations and initiations.

In fact, the land originally belongs to spirits, and the chief 622 who succeeds the founder of the village is the only one who is able 776 to establish contact with the chief of the spirits and negotiate with him. He is the earthly administrator of the spirit; he assures his worship, the exploitation of the land, and the organization of the community territory.

621 The first chief of the land was the first occupant; the suc- 622 ceeding chiefs are his heirs, following the order of succession. To found a new village, a chief chooses a place in unoccupied territory, usually at a crossroads, near a water source, near a baobab, [718 a doubalé, or other sacred tree. He offers sacrifices to the spirits 824] and receives in exchange their authorization to settle. If his group prospers, and less fortunate families want to establish themselves in this well-favored location, they ask the chief for authorization. However, as Monteil (1) remarks: "... The fa of a familial community depends strictly on the patriarchy only if, attached to it by the male line, he holds some goods of the patriarchy or if he claims rights in this patriarchy. In the contrary case, the family fa conducts himself as a stranger in relation to the patriarchy, which can only treat him in like fashion ..." Every familial community becomes patriarchal at the death of the family head when he has no heirs (see the chapter on inheritance); the community then groups around itself familial communities which themselves include paternally related groups and maternally related groups. When the patriarchy is an old one, a considerable number of persons live under its aegis. All recognize dyamu and taboos (see below) in common.

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta].

621 When the settlement becomes too populous, a fa gathers a 631 group and founds another village. Afterwards, the people of neighboring districts may solicit the patronage of the first village, by participating in its djo (2) and by sacrificing to its guardian spirits.

2. See the chapter on religion.

621 The cluster of all these villages forms a kafo or kafu (canton) which
631 includes the original family, its oldest neighbors, the inhabitants of other villages, and, finally, the outsiders. All these people acknowledge common interests, and the villages of the same canton send representatives to the assembly which meets at the chief's residence. Thus, the large family grows into a patriarchy to form the dugu (village) and spreads out into a kafu. Sometimes, after these branchings out, certain offshoot communities adopt a special dyamu and other taboos. The new dyamu is joined to the old, and little by little supplants it. The principal characteristics of the mother community exist, to which are added [55] various new traits, but the relationship between the two communities is never extinguished. Inversely, natives even of different races but having the same dyamu consider themselves related, which for them implies respect for the ancestral traditions concerning the cult, the practice of mutual aid, respect for the authority of the fa, who must protect all his relatives no matter how remote the connection, and fidelity to all pacts between the communities. Finally, between individuals of different races, certain dyamu, although dissimilar, are considered equivalent and may be interchanged.

621 b. Alliances. -- The unity of a community is founded not only upon common interests, which we will examine later, but also upon a whole system of alliances.

Monteil distinguishs four types of alliance: the common cult (see the chapter on religion), marriage, the tné, and the oath.

621 Marriage: this is the most common form of alliance. When
581 a Bambara seeks an alliance with a family, he gives his daughter in
583 marriage to one of the members of that family, after providing her with a large dowry. Some interesting information on this subject is furnished us by Monteil (1). The alliance between two families

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta. Les Empires du Mali [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta. The Mali Empires.]

is reinforced still further when they establish the custom of exchanging women. In this way the Soninké family Niakaté allied itself to the

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776 elders; and above them, as undisputed lord, soars the eldest, the
181 gouatigi, or head of the family.

All the gouatigi are subject to heads of quarters, led by the
776 dougoutigi, (1) or village heads; these obey the kafotigi, or heads of
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1. The dougoutigi, or religious head of the village, takes precedence over the sotigi, or civil head. I believe that since the time of Carrier, administrator of the circle in 1901, this hierarchy as such has been officially done away with. It persists nevertheless, and the kafotigi and fama déou, priestly in character, secretly retain their prestige.

the canton, who in turn are governed by the fama déou, sons of the king or ministers. Such was the original organization of the Bambara, and all these petty chiefs, were absolute and uncontested lords, each in his own sphere.

776 Above them all there was the king, Fama or Massa (2), whose
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2. The word Massa, used to designate the king, also means "great and powerful sorcerer." In the beginning the king really had absolute power, both civil and religious, and was really the prince or pope of fetishism. If he were not, would he have been given the title of Massa, "great priest," "great sorcerer?"

chief function was to allow himself to live in affluence and /74/ sweet idleness. He held all his subjects in his hands; all were his slaves, from the least to the highest, and he had the power of life and death over each and every one.

776 621 793 Such a spirit is the exclusive property of one family, and even bears its name, or diamou. Its sacrificer, called gnéna-n-sonnaba, also bears the name of dougoutigi (1); he is, in fact, the real head of

1. Gnena, "fetish," "genie"; sonnaba, "great sacrificer"; dougou, "village"; tigi, "head," "master."

[291 516]

Typical Bambara headman.

the village. Although at present the civil and religious authorities [554] are separate in many places, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or religious priest, always holds precedence, and self-respecting people call him dougoutigi (head of the village), giving the title of sotigi (2) to the

2. So, "hut," "house"; tigi, "head."

one who has only civil authority. Here we have further evidence that the organization of the Bambara nation was, at its origin purely religious. The separation of the two authorities in certain hamlets can easily be understood.

● 631 Under the Bambara dynasty the kingdom of Ségou was divided into provinces, cantons, and villages. The king, Fama or Massa

631 ("great sorcerer who has communication with the invisible beings"), lived at Ségou with his court. At the head of each of his provinces he had a minister responsible for levying the tax (/this man was/ his tool, often one of his children, to whom -- doubtless for this reason -- was given the title of Fama, petty king. The minister did his work through the intermediary of the heads of cantons, or kafotigi, under who, with respect to civil matters, were all the heads of villages, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi. /100/

The levying of the tax often gave rise to disputes between the kafotigi and the dougoutigi, and the latter would resign from his functions or be relieved of them. After that he lost all civil powers but none of his religious or priestly authority, and since the religious sphere had precedence over the civil, he kept his title of dougoutigi in his role as gnéna-n-sonnaba. The one who replaced him /in the civil sphere/ was never anything but an upstart and worthy only of the name sotigi ("head of houses"), although his responsibility became hereditary.

798 793 624 Under Moslem domination the worship of the gnéna, or djiné, was forbidden and punished by very severe penalties (slavery or death). It can thus be believed that it was to the advantage of the gnena-n-sonnaba to keep their position quiet, to refuse the title of dougoutigi, and even to forbid their people to bestow it on them. In Bani country and among the Bambara of Sikasso and Koutiala, where Moslem domination was never solidly established, there was no cause for similar fears, and it is understandable that the custom of calling the religious head dougoutigi and the civil head sotigi has been retained.

624 793 The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, is helped in his duties by a siéré (aide, deputy); the heads of quarters (sotigi) and the heads of families (gouatigi) make up his council. Nothing important is done in the village without consulting its head, who calls all his elders together and decides nothing without them. All of them are also present at any sacrifice if it is offered by a family, and it is not unusual to see them going single file, evening or morning, to the sacred grove of the fetish. On the morning of a marriage, they always go there.